

REMARKS

Claim Status:

Claims 22-25 and 37-45 are presently under consideration. Claims 1-21 and 26-36 are withdrawn from consideration.

New claims 37-45 are believed supported by the application as filed.

Claims 22-25 have been amended to direct their scope to alternative aspects of the invention. These amendments are made without prejudice and without forfeiture of equivalent arrangements. Claim 22 is now broader in many regards. For example, claim 22 now recites "steganographic encoding" instead of "--digital watermarking--"; now recites "steganographic decoder" instead of "--watermark decoding device--"; and the network now "includes or communicates" with a database, etc., etc.

Election Affirmation

Applicants affirm the election of claims 22-25. New claims 37-45 are also believed to be properly grouped with claims 22-25.

Double-Patenting Rejection

Claims 22-25 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-29 of U.S. Patent No. 6,694,043. This rejection is respectfully traversed. The original claims and those of U.S. Patent 6,694,043 are believed to be patentably distinct.

Nevertheless, this rejection seems moot in view of the present amendments. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Art-based Rejection

Claims 22-25 stand rejected as being anticipated by Hecht (U.S. Patent No. 5,901,224). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants note the amendments to claim 22. These amendments have been made to direct the scope of the claim to alternative aspects of the invention (please see the

related discussion above). The outstanding rejection is also believed to be moot in view of the present amendments.

Hecht is not understood to teach or suggest the combination recited in claim 22. For example, Hecht is not understood to teach a method of printing documents in a network where the network comprising a steganographic decoder and a plurality of printing devices as recited claim 22. The network includes or communicates with a database, and the database associates electronic files with plural-bit identifiers. The method includes: i) receiving a plural-bit identifier, wherein the plural bit identifier is obtained from steganographic encoded data that is decoded from optical scan data, and wherein the optical scan data corresponds to a steganographically encoded physical document, and wherein the steganographic encoding comprises the plural-bit identifier, and wherein said decoding is carried out by the steganographic decoder to retrieve the plural-bit identifier; ii) determining an associated electronic copy of the document through communication with the database which, with at least reference to the plural-bit identifier, identifies the associated electronic copy of the document; iii) determining at least one of the plurality of printing devices to render the electronic copy of the document to, wherein said determining at least one of the plurality of printing devices to render the electronic copy of the document to is influenced by at least one of a location of the steganographic decoder, a location of the physical document and a location of an optical scanner which generated the optical scan data; and iv) rendering the electronic copy of the document to the determined printing device.

Hecht is not understood to teach or suggest the combination recited in new claim 39. For example, Hecht fails to teach or suggest a method comprising: i) receiving optical scan data corresponding to a printed object, wherein the optical scan data is provided by a handheld computing device that includes an optical sensor; ii) analyzing the optical scan data to obtain a steganographic message embedded therein, wherein the steganographic message comprises plural-bit data; and iii) triggering rendering of an electronic document that is associated with the plural bit data through communication of the plural-bit data to a network resource, wherein the electronic document is rendered by a rendering device identified from a plurality of possible rendering devices, and wherein an identification of the rendering device is influenced by at least a location of the

handheld computing device, and wherein the rendering device and the handheld computing device are separate devices.

Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are also believed to recite patentable combinations. Favorable and independent consideration is requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement accompanies this Amendment. Consideration of the information cited therein is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request an early notice of allowance. The Office is invited to telephone the undersigned at 503-469-4685 if any issue remains.

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Respectfully submitted,

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